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GOOD-NIGHT STORIES

BY CLARA INGRAM JUDSON





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GOOD-NIGHT STORIES

Good-Night Stories

BY
CLARA INGRAM JUDSON

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
CLARA POWERS WILSON



CHICAGO
A. C. McCLURG & CO.

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CLARA POWERS WILSON

Bobby Cottontail goes forth
to kill a bear

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BOBBY COTTONTAIL'S BEAR

DOWN in a corner of the wood, in a comfortable old beech tree, lived Mr. Billy Racoon. He was sturdy and plump and so very industrious that he never lacked for food.

One day in the early fall, Bobby Cottontail, a lively little white and gray rabbit who lived near by, started in search of adventure and a good time, and as he passed the beech tree, who should he spy but Billy Racoon!

“Hello, there!” he called, “what you doing this morning, Billy?”

“I’m not doing anything — yet,” replied Billy, “what are you?”

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Bobby sat down at the foot of the tree. "I'm going deep into the wood," he said solemnly, "and I'm going to have some wonderful adventures."

"You don't say so?" said Billy, and he was so interested he was nearly envious. He slowly climbed down the tree toward Bobby. "You're always having luck," he said; "do tell me all that you are going to do today."

That was exactly what Bobby Cottontail wanted to do. He licked his chops, straightened a hair or two in his tail and began. "First I shall go from here into the forest — into the dark and gloomy forest."

"Dear me," interrupted Billy Raccoon, "won't you be afraid?"

"Me? Afraid?" exclaimed Bobby Cottontail, "you must be thinking of someone else. I'm *never* afraid!"

Billy Raccoon was quite ashamed of himself (as Bobby intended he should be) and he resolved never again to interrupt. "No, of course you wouldn't be," he said in an

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effort to make himself right with Bobby, "but I would be. That's what I was thinking of, you see."

"Well, I'm not afraid of anything," said Bobby quite mollified, "so you mustn't judge me by yourself."

"I won't," replied Billy humbly; "but what will you do next?"

"Oh, next?" asked Bobby Cottontail, "well, I'll hunt up the biggest bear I can find."

Billy Raccoon gulped. He was so impressed he simply couldn't say one word.

"And then," continued Bobby, "I'll say to him, 'You get out of this wood or I'll fight you,' that's just what I'll say to him!"

Billy Raccoon heaved a sigh. "Oh, but you are brave, Bobby," he exclaimed. "I'm so glad I know you!" And then he happened to think of something. "But suppose he fights back? What will you do then?"

"Never fear," replied Bobby grandly,

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“he won’t. He will know that I’d simply jump at his throat and eat him up. Oh, I’d do it — if he didn’t behave — and he knows it!”

Billy Raccoon was trembling with enthusiasm. “Come, let’s go right away,” he cried.

“Oh, what’s the hurry?” asked Bobby, “I like to visit with you.”

“But I want to see you kill the bear,” insisted Billy. “I think it’s going to be wonderful.”

“Yes, it will be,” said Bobby, “but I don’t feel like hurrying off the very first minute I come. I like to talk with you.”

“That’s nice of you, Bobby,” said Billy, “for I know it must be stupid to talk to an uninteresting person like I am. But I’ll excuse you this time. Don’t mind about me. Just run along to the bear.”

“Well — er — a — all right,” said Bobby, “but hadn’t you better go with me?”

“Of course I had intended to follow where I could see what you were doing,”

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admitted Billy, "but I couldn't go right along with you. I'm not brave as you are you know."

"Never mind," answered Bobby, "you'll learn. And anyway, I'll protect you. You'll have nothing to fear. Now I'll tell you a good plan. You go ahead a little way and then if you see a bear, you run to shelter and I'll take care of him."

Billy Raccoon didn't think much of that idea, but he didn't like to seem a coward. So he came slowly down from his tree and started for the forest, the dark and gloomy forest. Without even so much as a look behind him (he was scared to look for fear a bear would pop out and eat him) he walked on and on into the forest.

And Bobby Cottontail? He let Billy get a good start and then he followed along behind watching carefully to the right and to the left as he went.

"I don't see any bear," said Billy, in a trembly voice.

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“No, of course not this soon,” replied Bobby; “we’re not deep enough in the forest. You keep on watching and don’t look around behind, Billy. I’m taking care of you.”

So they went deeper and deeper into the forest.

Now it seemed to Billy Racoon that Bobby Cottontail’s voice sounded very far away. But he was afraid to look around so he didn’t find out that Bobby was way far behind, way, *way* behind.

So they went deeper and deeper into the forest.

“Don’t you think that you’d better go ahead now?” asked Billy. “It’s pretty near time to find the bear now and you know I’m not as brave as you are.”

“Well, it’s time you learned to be brave,” said Bobby loudly. “Think how proud you’ll be when you can go back and tell the other racoons that you explored with me into the dark and gloomy forest, and that

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you found a bear — and — well, and all that, you know.”

“ I am thinking about that,” said Billy, “ but I can’t help thinking about the bear too.”

“ Pooh!” twitted Bobby, “ who’s afraid of a bear? Nothing but a bunch of fur and growl! I’m sure you’re not such a coward as to be afraid of that.”

Billy Racocon wasn’t so sure but he gulped and didn’t say anything for a minute. Then he remarked, “ Seems to me your voice sounds so far off. Don’t get too far behind.”

Now Bobby had been lagging further and further behind, but of course he didn’t want Billy Racocon to find that out. So he spoke up real loud and firm. “ Oh you just think that, because you’re a little scary. I’m right here and I’m taking care of you.”

And so they went deeper and deeper into the forest.

Billy Racocon went walking right along

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and walking right along — and he didn't say another word. To tell the truth, every time he tried to speak he got a great lump of 'fraidness in his throat and he couldn't get the words out — they couldn't get past the lump!

And so they went deeper and deeper into the forest.

Then, all of a sudden, right in front of Billy Raccoon, there sounded — a great — big — GROWL! A loud — fierce — GR—OWL!

The lump of 'fraidness in Billy Raccoon's throat got so big it spread all over his whole body — over his body and down his legs so that he couldn't move a step. Then, quite as suddenly, the lump vanished; strength came into Billy Raccoon's legs and he turned and ran and ran and ran; ran till he reached his own home tree; climbed up into the branches, hung himself up by one hind foot and one fore foot and pretended he was asleep.

Later in the day, when he had recovered from his fright enough to open one eye,

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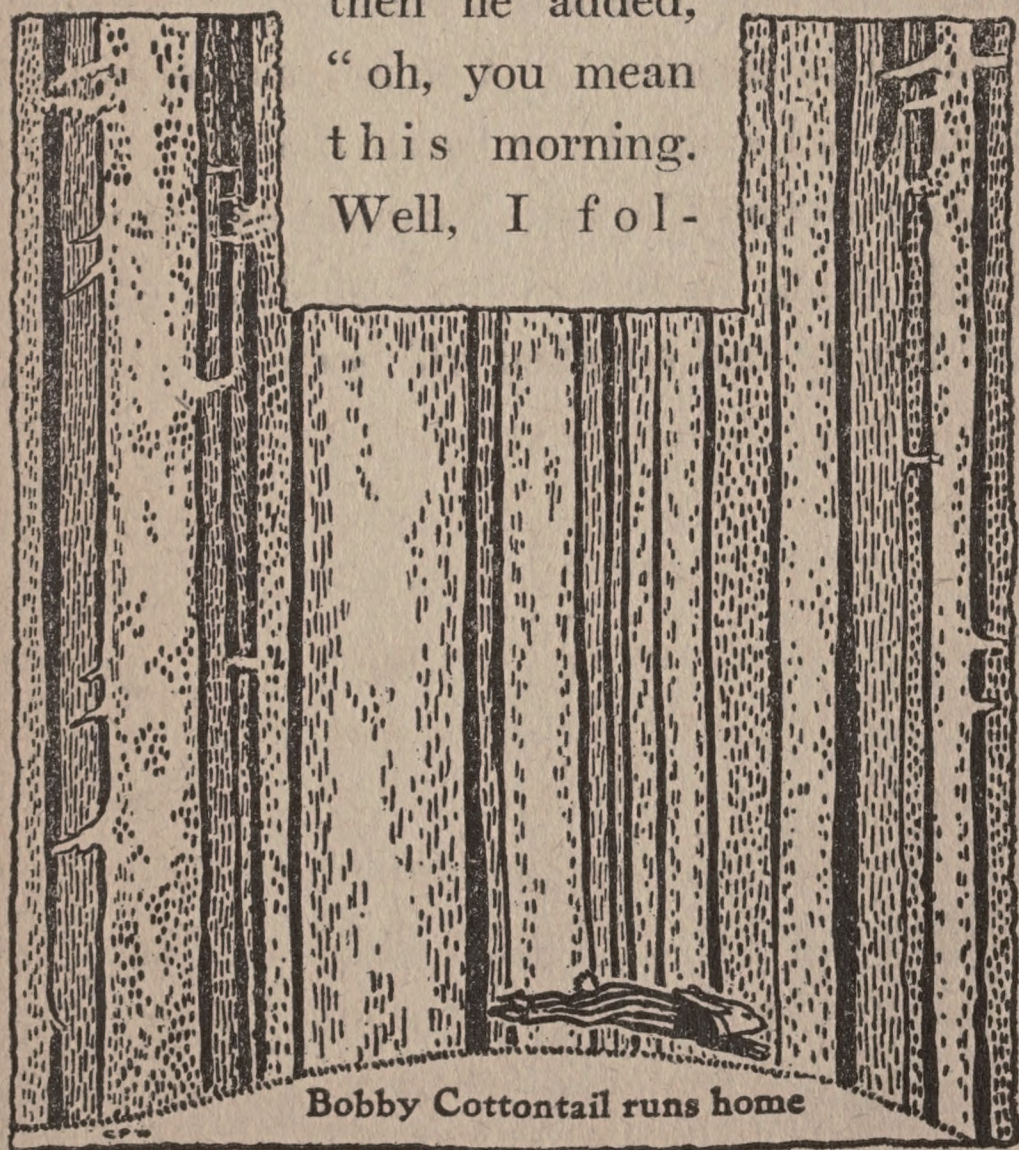
he spied Bobby Cottontail skipping by. "Hello, there, Bobby," he called, "did he fight very long?"

"Who fight?" asked Bobby with interest.

"The bear, of course," replied Billy.

"I didn't see any bear," said Bobby, and then he added,

"oh, you mean this morning. Well, I fol-



Bobby Cottontail runs home

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lowed you quite a way into the forest and then I happened to remember an errand my mother had told me to do — and I *always* mind my mother, you know — so I ran back and did the errand.”

Billy Raccoon looked hard at Bobby. “ So that’s the way you kill a bear is it? ” he exclaimed in disgust. “ You’re just as big a coward as I am and I’ve found it out! ”

And Bobby Cottontail couldn’t think of a single thing to say so he just dropped his tail limply and sneaked off home.

FIVE LITTLE DOVES

IN a great wire cage in a certain museum of birds, there once lived five little doves. They were sleek and dainty and they always had a nice clean cage and plenty to eat. Therefore their neighbor, the owl, was much surprised one fine day to hear them complaining about their hard, hard life.

“Of all creatures on earth we are the most unfortunate!” groaned one dove.

“Alas! Alas! for our sad lot!” sighed another.

“Ah me! I wish I were dead!” wept a third.

“Misery is ours!” cried a fourth.

“Ah, but our lot is hard!” sighed the fifth.

“Well at least you agree about it,” exclaimed the old owl, tartly. “To hear you five doves talk one would think you were a

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trouble trust; that you had a monopoly on all the trouble in the world!”

“Monopoly?” asked the first dove, forgetting his misery for the minute, “what’s that?”

“Please, Mr. Owl, don’t use such big words,” said the second dove before the owl had time to answer the first dove’s question, “there is trouble enough in the world without your adding to it. What is this monopoly you speak of?”

“It’s what you’ve got,” said the owl crossly, for he was now much provoked with them. “It’s all the trouble in the world locked up with an iron chain and hung around your neck — that’s what it is!”

The doves looked at each other carefully. Sometimes Mr. Owl made fun of them in his solemn way — and that was very hard to endure because he always laughed at them afterwards. But his face was very solemn just now so they decided that he must be talking seriously.

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“ Yes, that’s just what we have,” agreed the first dove, “ all the trouble in the world.”

“ Well,” said the owl, as he drew up one foot and squeezed the toes to rest himself, “ you must admit there’s one good thing about that state of affairs — if you have all the trouble, nobody else has any. And of course that’s very nice for everybody else.” And he blinked his left eye and looked at the five sorrowful doves.

Then he noticed that they really did look sad and he was moved to say kindly, “ But what may your trouble be? ”

That was just what the doves wanted him to say. For as you very well know, the only good thing about having trouble is the fun of telling other folks about it. The doves brightened noticeably and the biggest one said, “ Alas! This is our trouble, we cannot sleep in the daytime! ” And he said it as though it was the worst thing that could happen.

“ Why not? ” asked the owl.

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“ If we sleep by day, we’ll be sure to miss something that happens in front of our cage.” And just to prove what a great trouble that really was, every dove heaved a great big sigh.

“ But did it ever occur to you,” asked the owl, and he tried to look serious as the doves wanted him to, “ that you might take turns at sleeping? Then the one who stayed awake could watch and report to the others all that happened while they slept? ”

“ No,” said the five doves all together, “ it didn’t occur to us. But it sounds like a good idea. We’ll try it.”

So they counted out and the one who was “ it ” stayed awake and the others took a long, comfortable nap. And then the next in turn let the first dove sleep. And so on ever after.

And that is the reason why, at that particular museum, you so often see four little doves huddled together sound asleep and one little dove keeping watch.

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Moreover, if you stand very long watching them, you may even hear Mr. Owl in his near-by cage whisper softly, “that’s the way with trouble! That’s the way with trouble! Nothing’s so bad after all!”



HOW DO YOU SLEEP?

A TINY little field mouse named Gray Coat waked up one morning with a stitch in his side. Not a really truly stitch made with a thread and needle you understand, but one of those funny little achy pains that you sometimes get in your side when you have lain crookedly in your sleep.

“Ouch! That hurts!” he squeaked as he moved a little too quickly.

“What’s the matter, Gray Coat?” asked Furry. Furry was Gray Coat’s mate — the jolliest, most industrious little mate you could possibly imagine.

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“Oh, I’ve such a dreadful pain in my side!” grumbled Gray Coat, “I don’t believe anybody ever had such a bad pain before!”

“Tut! Tut! That’s a foolish way to talk,” said Furry pleasantly. “How about that time when you caught your foot in a trap? Didn’t that hurt worse than now?”

Gray Coat knew perfectly well that it did, but he didn’t like to admit it; so he just pretended to be rubbing his sore side very hard. Furry was a wise little field mouse and she knew better than to try to make Gray Coat talk just then.

“I think the trouble is that you slept crookedly on your side,” she said comfortingly.

“That’s true,” said Gray Coat, much pleased that she had thought of a reason for the hurt, “and I mean to get a different way to sleep.”

Furry laughed. “There’s no different way to sleep! You’re joking!”

“I’m not so sure about that,” replied Gray

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Coat, "anyway I can inquire;" and just at that minute who should come by but their friend Mr. Bat.

"Oh, Mr. Bat, come here," called Gray Coat, "I'd like to speak to you a minute."

"Very well, here I am," replied Mr. Bat kindly. (You see he was always very friendly and nice because he was a sort of a second cousin to the field mice.) "Only please don't keep me very long because it's already passed my bedtime and I'm very sleepy."

"I won't," promised Gray Coat, "because that's the very thing I want to talk to you about. How do you sleep?"

"How do I sleep?" asked Mr. Bat in surprise, "why I sleep all day with my eyes shut tight."

"That's not what he means," explained Furry. "You see, he has a pain in his side from lying crookedly, and he wants to know if you can tell him a better way to sleep."

"There's only one way *to* sleep," said Mr.

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Bat positively; "that is with your feet hooked up and your head hanging down."

"Oh, Mr. Bat!" exclaimed the two field mice.

"So, so," said Mr. Bat, "you see you have come to the right person. I'll show you a much better way to sleep than curled up in a ball—I should think your side *would* hurt! Now look at me. This is the only way to sleep."

Furry and Gray Coat followed Mr. Bat into the dusty hollow of an old stump. And what do you suppose he did there? He hung himself up on the side of the wall. Hung himself by his toes—head down. Think of that!

"That is the only comfortable way to sleep!" said he and off he went into a doze.

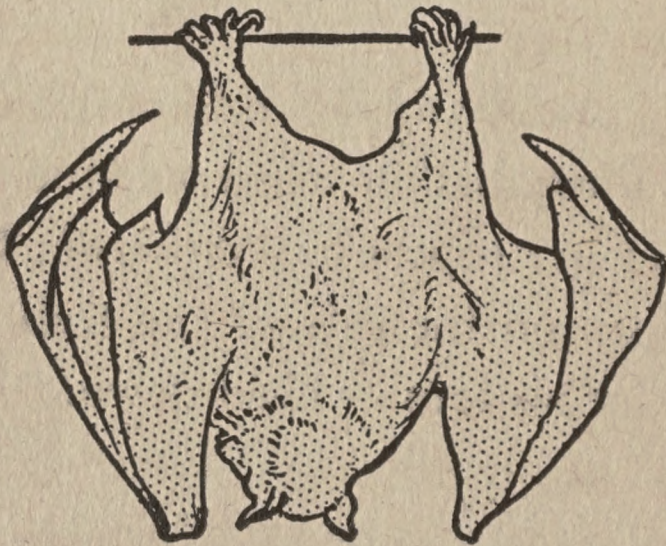
Furry and Gray Coat looked at him in amazement. And then they both shook their heads.

"That may suit him," said Gray Coat finally, "but for me, I'll lay down on the

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soft bark or grass even if I do sleep crookedly sometimes.”

And off he scampered without another thought of his hurt side.



THE SQUIRREL'S NEW PANTRY

TWO little wide-awake squirrels hunted so many nuts that they could hardly find places enough in which to put them all.

“Oh, my dear tail,” said Bushy (that was a favorite expression of his), “wherever am I going to put this last batch of nuts?”

“Don't ask me!” exclaimed White Spot, “I am having troubles of my own. Every nook and corner I can find is full.”

“No use going up your tree to look then, is there?” asked Bushy.

“None at all,” replied White Spot, and he took one more squint around to see if he couldn't possibly get a bright idea about another storing place.

“What's up there?” he asked suddenly.

“Up where?” said Bushy craning his neck.

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“Silly!” laughed White Spot, “can’t you see?”

Bushy craned his neck this way and that in his effort to see around the yard. Yes there was something new there. Something that looked exactly like a tiny little brown house perched up on a big, tall pole. You see, Bushy and White Spot couldn’t know as you and I do, that that queer new something was a handsome, brand-new wren house that was put there only that same morning. And not knowing, of course they were puzzled.

“Now I wonder when that came?” said White Spot.

“I don’t care a wag when it came,” said Bushy, “but I do mean to find out what it is.” He looked all around the yard to see if the coast was clear, then he scampered over as fast as ever he could go to the foot of the pole. There he stopped for a cautious examination.

You see Bushy was very brave, but he

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didn't believe in running into trouble — not he! He always enquired into new things very carefully. This time he nibbled at the pole and then he called to White Spot, "This seems to be a very common sort of wooden pole. I mean to climb up." And up he went.

At the top he found the cunningest little bird house you ever saw. It was made of brown, weathered oak and had a porch, some tiny windows, and a tiny, tiny door. Bushy admired and explored and then called down to White Spot, "This is the finest place for storing nuts you ever saw! The only trouble is the door. It's entirely too small, but I shall soon gnaw my way in, never fear." And he set to work.

In a very short time he had made that opening plenty big and then he ran down to the ground for nuts. Both he and White Spot worked diligently and happily till the wren house was all cluttered full of nuts — and just then the man who had put up the wren house came home.

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He spied the squirrels scampering down the pole. He saw the gnawed doorway and he suspected the clutter of nuts that was inside. And it made him very angry.

“ I bought that house for birds,” said he crossly, and then what do you suppose he did? He got a piece of tin with a hole the size of a silver quarter of a dollar — such a little, little hole — and he nailed that tin right across the door of the house.

“ There! ” said he as he climbed down his ladder, “ I guess squirrels won't get into that house any more! ”

And they didn't. Poor little Bushy tried his best, he nearly broke his sharp teeth! But he couldn't gnaw tin so he had to give up both his nuts and his fine new pantry.

A BIRD SCHOOL

“SEEMS to me everybody’s going to school these days,” said a little English sparrow as he balanced himself on a wire clothes line.

“So?” asked his mother, “who for instance?”

“Well, that kind little boy on the third floor for instance,” replied the little sparrow. “He was so good to me all summer. He always put out the nicest crumbs! Three times every day!”

“And he’s forgotten you now?” asked the mother sparrow.

“No, not really forgotten me,” the little sparrow admitted, “but he don’t pay as much attention to me as he used to. He just throws out the crumbs in the morning and then hastily shuts the window and runs off to school.”

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The mother sparrow laughed. "Well if that's all the ill treatment you get you should not complain. I wouldn't."

"But I don't like it," insisted the little sparrow. "I like to talk to him and I know he likes to talk to me, but I believe he really likes his school better."

"That's natural — school is interesting," replied the mother sparrow.

"Oh, is it, mother?" asked the little sparrow. "What do you know about going to school?"

"I know a lot about it," she said, and with a contented little flourish of her feathers she settled down to tell him. (Is there anything more fun than telling all you know — and maybe just a little bit more — to someone who can't dispute you?)

"You see, last year I had a nest under the eaves of the schoolhouse up the street," began the mother sparrow, "and so I learned a lot about school."

"Dear me, I wish you had built there this

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year," grumbled the little sparrow, "maybe that's the very school my little boy goes to."

"Well, I didn't," said the mother sparrow, in her practical fashion, "so I'll tell you all I know instead. The children sit in rows and read out of books; then they stand in rows and say things out of their heads; everything is in rows."

"Dear me," said the little sparrow in a puzzled voice, "that sounds very queer and uninteresting."

"That's because you're a bird," answered his mother. "Children like it. They like to do things all together and in rows that way."

The little sparrow pondered over that for quite a while, then he said, "I wish birds could have school."

"The idea," laughed his mother. "Don't think so much; you'll get foolish."

"Oh, no, I won't," said the little sparrow. Then, with a sudden inspiration he added, "But I'm going to start a bird school. Then maybe the little boy will like me again."

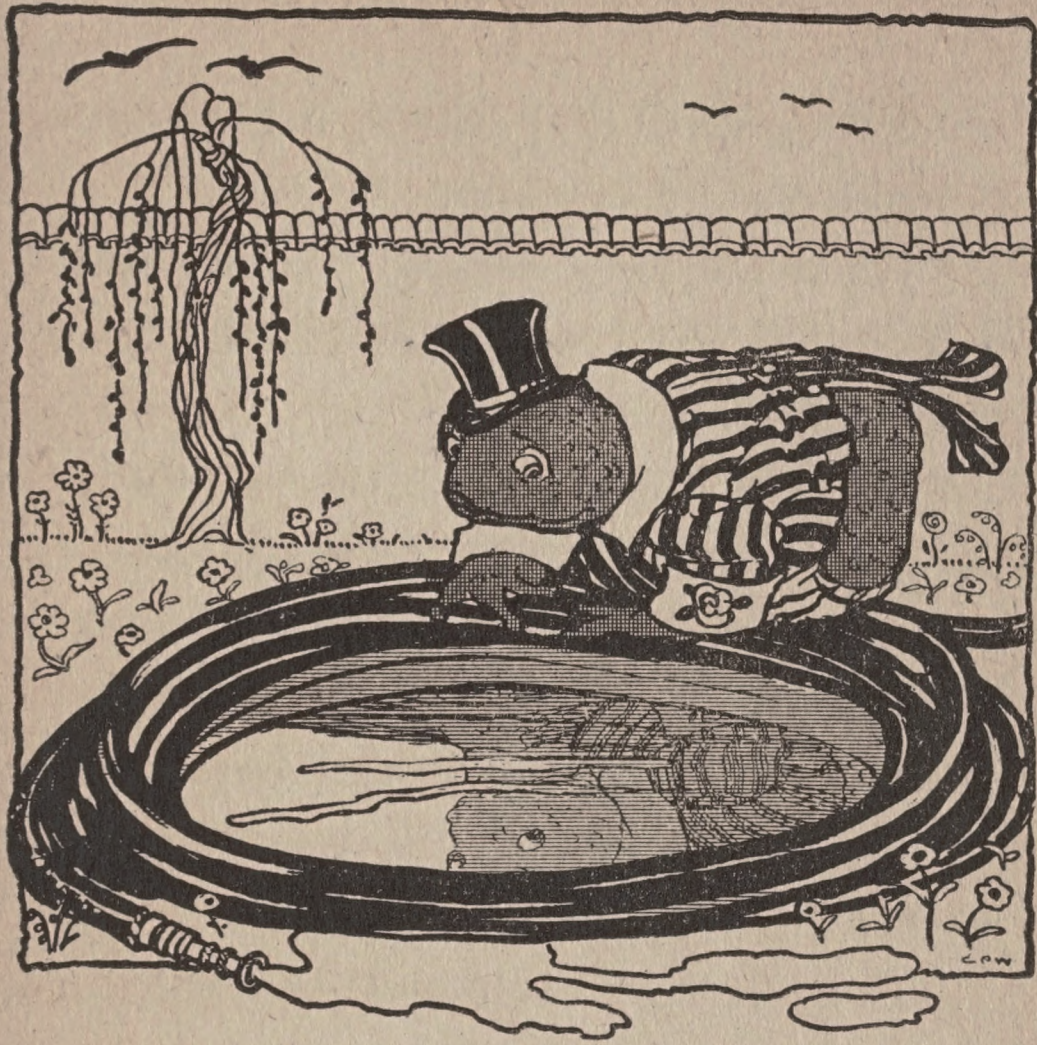
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“Where will you have it?” asked his mother. “Birds are not used to doing things in rows you know.”

“Yes, I know that,” replied the little sparrow, “so I mean to hold my school on wires — then the birds will have to stay in rows! I’ll have school on the clothes line and on the telegraph wires.”

And would you believe it, he did that very thing! He called all his bird friends and they sat on the wires and pretended they had school. The kind little boy saw them when he came home from school (as you may too if you look), and he was so interested that he stayed at the window a long time and watched.

Of course that made the little sparrow very proud and happy, and after that he and his friends played bird school every fine day.



THE FAT GARDEN TOAD

A COMMON, every-day garden toad lived in a back-yard garden. The garden was large and the flies were plenty, and as he was the only toad in the garden he had enough to eat without working very hard.

One day as he was lazily dozing under

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some wide-spreading leaves, a grasshopper came along and saw him.

“ Good morning, Friend Toad,” said he cheerfully, “ and what are you doing this fine day? ”

“ Oh, nothing much,” answered the toad sleepily, “ I don’t have to work hard you see, for I am king here so I can have plenty to eat all the time.”

“ Is that so? ” asked the grasshopper. “ Then perhaps that’s the reason you are so fat.”

“ I’m not fat!” retorted the toad, “ you mustn’t speak to me that way.”

“ Oh, all right,” replied the grasshopper, and with a zip and a whir he was gone.

The toad shut his eyes ready to go to sleep again. But somehow, he could not go to sleep. He kept thinking and thinking about what the grasshopper had said about his being fat.

“ The very idea of calling me fat!” thought he. “ I well remember how I looked

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at myself in a puddle last spring and I never will forget how graceful and slim I was! Fat, indeed!" And he hopped around under another leaf where the ground was better to lie upon. "I'll think no more about it!"

Just then two sparrows flew down near by.

"Here's a fine worm," said one.

"Get it quick before the toad wakes up!" said the other.

"The toad!" exclaimed the first scornfully, "he'll not wake up for a long time. He's so fat and so lazy he don't even tend to his garden as he should — he just eats and sleeps all the day."

"Funny," said the toad to himself as the sparrows flew away, "I don't think I'm fat, and yet they seem to." He sat there for quite a while blinking sleepily and wondering how he could really find out if he was fat.

Finally he heard some robins talking and he looked to see where they were. They were splashing and sputtering in a puddle left by the garden hose. Immediately an idea oc-

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curred to the toad. He would look in the puddle and prove to himself that he was not fat. So he waited patiently (toads are always good at waiting) till the robins finished their toilets and flew away.

Then he hopped slowly and carefully toward the puddle, looking sheepishly around to see if anyone observed his vanity. No, he was alone.

When he was close up to the water he looked and saw — not the dainty little speckled creature he remembered himself to be, but a great, fat, blotchy toad, so big and so puffed up that the water could hardly show his whole picture.

“Oh dear,” he sighed, “I guess they were right! And now I’ll have to begin to exercise!”

And sure enough he did. Now that toad hops all day and he hops all evening. He hops and he hops and he hops all the time so he’ll get thin. But the poor old fellow is fat as ever — only the hot summer sun has dried

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up the puddles and he can't see himself any more.

So, not knowing, he is tired and happy — and fat.

THE CARDINAL'S BREAKFAST

AS you sit down to a nice breakfast of fruit and cereal and maybe a poached egg on toast, did it ever occur to you to wonder what the birds are eating that very same minute? Of course you know that they eat worms and grubs and insects, but perhaps they like something else too. Notice sometime when you are out walking and see if some birds don't eat grains or seeds.

The pretty little scarlet cardinal who makes such a gay streak as he flies across the garden, likes seeds much better than worms or grubs and if you want to coax him to your garden throw out some wheat and watch him come. In the seed time of the year when every plant has its own little pods of seeds, watch and you will see him, for that is his feasting season.

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All summer long a certain scarlet cardinal had kept his eye on a beautiful garden, for he was sure that some day he would find extra good eating there. Above all, he kept his eye on the big tall sunflower at the back of the garden.

Early in the summer this sunflower was a lovely big blossom, so big and so cheerful and so sunny that it made the whole garden smile. But now the goldy petals were all dried up and blown away and the soft velvety center was hard and full of big fat seeds. You would have thought that the flower was prettiest while in bloom but the cardinal would never, never have agreed with you. He didn't care a bit about a yellow blossom; but a dead blossom full of seeds — that's different, that's the very nicest thing in the world!

For days the cardinal watched that seedy sunflower. He watched the seeds dry up and tested them daily with a gentle little peck. But no, they were not quite right, and

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with a whisk and a whirr he would fly away to come another day.

But finally one morning he decided that the seeds were just right and that he would stay and eat them for breakfast. Round and round that sunflower plant he circled, singing joyously, for all the world like a child around a birthday cake! Then he lighted on the seeds ready to eat the first course.

But alas! The flower stem that had been so brave and strong when the flower was young was now old and frail and easily bent. Even the weight of a dainty cardinal bent the face of the dried up flower so that the bird slid off in the air.

“Well, well,” said the cardinal to himself, “think of that! I’ll have to get those seeds some other way.” After much thinking and experimenting he decided to get them on the fly. So he made a quick dash, flew past the flower and pecked out a seed as he passed.

Without stopping even to taste it, he dropped the seed and got out another and

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another till several seeds lay on the ground underneath the sunflower plant. Then he daintily alighted on the ground and ate his breakfast in a leisurely and gentlemanly fashion.

THE CITY-BROKE SQUIRREL

YOU think that's a funny name for a story? Well, perhaps it is. But let me tell you something, the city-broke squirrel was funnier still! You have heard of city-broke horses (though in these automobile days we don't think much about them) but who ever heard of a city-broke squirrel? Yet there was one, and this is a story about him.

This certain squirrel, his name was Bushy, lived in a woodsy campus of a small city college. Bushy made his home in one of the big hollow trees on the campus and there he lived very happily storing up his nuts for the winter and frolicing as only a squirrel can.

One summer he noticed an unusually big noise and commotion going on across the road that bordered the campus.

“I wonder what can be going on over

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there?" he asked himself after he had perched where he could get a good look. "Seems as if they are trying to do something." He scurried down a branch, cocked his head knowingly to one side, then gave a sure leap to another branch and scrambled up the tree trunk.

"I can't seem to see anything here," he grumbled, "I believe I'll run down to the curb stone and hear what those men are talking about."

So he did. And there he heard all about the new happening. A new house was to be built directly facing the campus. And a new house meant men and commotion and strange new things.

"I'm afraid I'm not going to like this building business," said Bushy to himself, and he climbed back up into the tree to watch.

For many a day Bushy watched the workmen and horses from his safe perch in the tree, and then a new idea entered his head.

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“They don’t seem to bother me much,” thought he, “I think I’ll run over there and see if there’s anything good to eat.”

He waited till the workmen were all gone for the day and then he ran across the street. Was there anything for him? Indeed yes! The most tasteful, appetizing scraps Bushy had ever eaten — that’s what there was! He ate everything he could find and then he hurried home resolved to call again the next day.

But as he ran thoughtlessly across that street, a great automobile dashed by and — nearly — ran — over — poor — Bushy! He was that frightened he could hardly climb a tree on the other side! Such a narrow escape he never had had in all his life! He had a great breathless lump of fright in his throat for hours afterward.

“I like those good scraps,” he said, when finally he got his breath, “but never again will I take such chances with that road. I’ll look before I cross.”

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So always after that when he wanted to cross the road to forage for goodies, he sat on the curb and looked up and down that road for automobiles. Wasn't he a wise little Bushy? The workmen learned to know him and to watch for him and save him choice titbits. And they called him "the city-broke" squirrel.

THE GREEDY BLACKBIRD

ONE bright summer morning two blackbirds started out for a trip together.

“ I’m tired of worms and flies and bugs of all sorts,” said one, “ and I think by this time there ought to be some nice ripe seeds in yonder garden.”

“ I like seeds too,” said the other, “ and I think we can find some. Come on, let’s go and explore.” So gaily they flew over to the garden nearby.

Sure enough! There not only were some seeds, but many seeds; nice, ripe, brown and black seeds just ready for the taking.

“ Look! Look!” cried the bluest blackbird as he perched on a wire directly over the garden, “ did you ever see so many seeds? Why didn’t we come here before? There are so many seeds I hardly know where to begin eating.”

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“That’s easy,” laughed the blackest black-bird. “I’m going to begin right here.” And he darted down from his perch on the wire to a cluster of ripe brown seeds in the cornflower bed.

That was too much for the bluest black-bird. He immediately forgot his manners and the garden full of seeds. He could remember nothing, he could see nothing but that cluster of seeds his friend meant to eat! Quick as a flash he was changed from a happy, jolly partner to a screaming, greedy fury.

Down from the wire he darted. “Get away from there!” he screamed, “that’s what I’m going to eat! Get away! That’s mine!”

The blackest bird was so amazed he could neither eat nor fly. Was this squawking, greedy fury his happy companion of a minute ago?

“Certainly I’ll get away,” he said politely, “I had no intention of taking what was

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yours." And he flew quickly over to another pod of seeds — he didn't care to stay in such company anyway.

But that wasn't what the greedy blackbird wanted. He wished to have the very seeds that his companion chose — the very seeds! So he chased him across the garden. "Here! Let me have that," he called the minute he saw his friend pause by a seed cluster, "that's the one I mean to eat."

He snapped and he pecked till the other blackbird was glad to fly away. Back and forth across the garden they darted; pausing by this seed pod and now by that, fighting, pecking and quarreling. You would have thought there was only one seed in that whole garden and that both birds were starving for it, instead of hundreds and thousands ready for the taking!

At last, tired and hungry and cross, they gave up trying to have anything to eat and flew back to their nests.

"Silly creatures," croaked the toad who

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had seen the whole performance, “ can’t they see there is plenty for all? ”

But they couldn’t see — that selfish little blackbird and his friend whom he had made into an enemy. They painfully smoothed their ruffled feathers and wished they had something to eat.

BUTTERFLIES

TWO little white butterflies began their lives close beside each other in a big garden. For many a day they had lain there among the leaves closely wrapped in their soft coverings but of course they were fast asleep then and knew or cared nothing about neighbors. On the bright warm day when they came out of their cocoons they were surprised and pleased to find company close by and together they started out to explore the garden.

“Look! Look!” cried one, “see that lovely red flower? I’d like to stop and play with it.” So they stopped a minute and hovered round that big red rose.

“Buzz, buzz, get out of my way!” hummed a big fat bumble bee savagely. “This is my flower, you mustn’t touch it! Buzz, buzz, get out of my way!”

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“ Oh, all right,” murmured the two little butterflies hastily, “ we didn’t intend to stay. We were only looking.” And they fluttered off to a big sunflower.

“ Isn’t this a gorgeous flower? ” asked one, “ I like it better than the rose.”

“ Do you? ” said the other, “ it is lovely, but I liked that rose. Let’s — ” And just then there was a whir-r and ’kplunk! and a great grasshopper landed squarely on the sunflower’s face.

“ What are you doing here? ” he demanded of the frightened butterflies.

“ If you please, we’re just leaving,” they explained, “ and anyway, we didn’t know this belonged to you.”

“ Oh, yes,” said the grasshopper grandly, “ this is my garden and I have to jump up here every once in a while to look things over a bit. You may stay a little while if you wish.”

“ Thank you, but we must be going,” replied the butterflies and with a flutter of



“Thank you, but we must be going,” replied the butterflies

snowy wings they left the big sunflower and flew towards the mulberry tree.

“Look at this lovely tree,” cried they, “aren’t we glad we came here?”

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“It’s a wonderful world,” added one, “I do not know what is the prettiest sight of all.”

“This tree is,” sang a cardinal, “and this is my tree, my tree, my tree!”

“So it is,” agreed the butterflies, “and we leave it to you alone,” and they flew off toward the road. Over the lawn, over the road, over garden and meadow they fluttered. They stopped to talk to the crickets, they chatted a moment with the robins. They made the acquaintance of the larkspur, the daisy and the wild aster.

But at no place did they stop long enough to call a spot their own — do you know why? Because little white butterflies live but one day and they have no time for home making. There is too much in this big world to see. They flutter and explore all their whole one day! Do you blame them?

MR. AND MRS. ROBIN

BRIGHT and early one spring day a certain Mr. and Mrs. Robin set to work building their nest. "Suppose we try some new place this year," suggested Mrs. Robin, "we have built in this same apple tree for so long that I think I'd like a change."

"I'm not much in favor of new things," replied Mr. Robin doubtfully, "though of course we can change if you like. What difference does it make if the apple tree *is* old? It's been a good tree for us before; why not build here now?"

Mrs. Robin good naturedly assented and so the nest was built in the old apple tree and the eggs were laid — five as beautifully colored eggs as ever laid in a robin's nest.

All went well till one night some time later, when a storm came up. The lightning

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flashed, the thunder rumbled, the rain came down in torrents and, worst of all, the wind blew a furious gale. The trees in the yard bent and twisted and turned under the force of the wind; but the old apple tree had not the strength and lithesomeness of its younger days and could not bend this way and that as the other trees did. When a great gust of wind shook it, it cracked brittlely and crashed to the ground.

“Something awful is happening!” Mrs. Robin screamed as she felt the tree give way.

“Don’t be frightened,” called Mr. Robin, “sit still on the eggs and I will take care of you the best I can.” He fluttered about vainly trying to look calm and peaceful and to do something for his little mate — but really he was quite as frightened as she was. Down, down, in one awful crash fell the apple tree and it laid across the yard at a sorry angle.

When the morning sun looked over that yard it saw branches of trees twisted and

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torn, tiny green apples and cherries and pears scattered over the ground and worst of all, the fine old apple tree, the king of the orchard, lying flat on the ground.

Two little children who lived in a house near by came to see what the storm had done. "Look at the old apple tree fallen down!" exclaimed the boy.

"And our robins' nest was in that tree," cried the little girl, "I wonder if the eggs are all broken?"

Hurriedly they ran to investigate. No, the nest was not disturbed though the tree was so twisted that it was tipped way to one side. Mrs. Robin could hardly sit on the eggs it was so tippy, though she was trying her best like the good little robin she was.

"Let's move the nest to some other tree," said the little girl, "some tree where Mrs. Robin will be more comfortable." So the boy and girl took the nest tenderly and placed it safely in a nearby peach tree.

Mr. and Mrs. Robin fluttered about anx-

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iously during the moving. They seemed to understand that the children meant no harm but they were anxious just the same till the nest was settled in a broad fork of a peach tree and the children had stepped away from the tree. Then Mrs. Robin fluttered down and carefully examined each egg. Finding them safe and unbroken she tittered a happy little "thank you" and nestled down to make the eggs warm and snug.

"It's a good thing we came out just when we did," said the little girl as she watched the contented robin mother.

"Yes, indeed," agreed the boy, "for those eggs would not have stayed long in that tipped over old tree."

"After this," proposed the little girl, "when there's a storm, let's always notice if the birds' nests are safe."

And at the same time Mr. Robin was saying, "thank goodness, we're safely over that trouble! Next time I'll take your advice and build in a younger tree!"

FIVE LITTLE ROBINS

Five little robins crowded more and more,
One flew away, and then there were four.

YES, that's just what happened.

Five little robins lived most contentedly in their nest in the old peach tree till they all grew so big they were hopelessly crowded — yes, crowded even for robins.

“ I wish you would keep out of my way,” grumbled the biggest robin baby as he tried to wiggle himself into a more comfortable position.

“ I don't think you have any right to complain,” said the middle-sized robin baby crossly, “ you take the most food and you take the most room and you wiggle and squirm over us all you please. I don't think you need to talk!”

“ You needn't say anything either,” said the littlest robin of all, who had been trying

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for days to get up courage to speak his troubles, "you four take the most space and the best worms and you don't even leave me room to grow. That's the reason I'm so small!" and he squirmed and rebelled as much as he dared.

"Children! Children! Please don't quarrel so!" cried the mother robin as she fluttered about the nest. "I do so want my babies to love each other and be kind."

"Then you'll have to give us more room," said the biggest robin baby wisely.

"We'd have more room if you were out of the way," grumbled the next to the biggest robin baby without even trying to be polite.

"All right, then, I'll go," replied the biggest daringly, "I've wanted to get out of the nest for a long time — now I will!" He climbed gaily up out of the crowded nest and stood jauntily on the edge.

"Oh, my dear! You mustn't! You'll be killed!" screamed his mother and in a panic of fright she flew about the nest.

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“Pooh! Don’t worry about me,” laughed the robin baby boastfully. “Did you want me to stay a baby forever? I mean to fly away and see the world.”

“But you don’t know! Wait till I teach you, you’re only a baby,” screamed his mother.

“Baby!” laughed the biggest robin, “watch me fly.”

The four robins settled themselves more comfortably in the nest and eyed their brother in his venture.

“Watch me! Here I go!” cried the boasting brother. And off he flew and was never heard from again.

Five little robins crowded more and more,
One flew away and then there were four.

AN IMITATION SHOWER

Four little robins living in a tree;
One got wet and then there were three.

ONE day two little girls were playing out in the yard under the old peach tree where the robins' nest was.

“Do you know,” said one little girl as she looked up into the peach tree, “I think those robin babies must be awfully thirsty. We haven't had rain in a long time and they don't get a drop of water.”

The other little girl carefully examined the robin babies as they peered over the edge of the nest. “I'll tell you what let's do,” she cried, “let's sprinkle them with the hose — they will be glad to get wet, I know.”

“You do make the finest plans,” cried the younger girl happily, “let's get the hose quickly!”

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They ran to the front yard, dragged back the hose and turned on the water.

“We may hurt the nest,” said the older girl thoughtfully, “let’s turn the water high in the tree and let it come down on the nest like rain.”

So they did.

Down through the old peach tree trickled the clear cold water drops much to the amazement of the baby robins.

Now at that very minute the most venturesome of the four baby robins decided he wanted to see something of the world on which the sun shone so brightly. His brother went away and was happy — why not he? So he climbed up onto the edge of the nest just at the minute the hose rain-storm began.

He felt the water — gave one cry of fright, then summoned all his courage and flew away — away over to the garden.

The three little birds who were left, twittered and called for their mother so beseech-

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ingly that she heard them clear over in the next dooryard and came flying to see what the matter might be. As she came nearer the tree she noticed the waterdrops. For a moment she paused on the edge of the nest in puzzled surprise.

“ Oh, mother,” shouted one baby, “ the sun was shining so nicely and warm and then all of a sudden this awful rain began.”

“ And big brother flew away,” screamed the second baby.

“ And I’m all wet,” wailed the third.

The mother gave one despairing glance at the bright sunshine and the raindrops and then she spread her wings and settled down to keep her babies dry.

“ They don’t seem to care much about water,” decided the little girls, and they turned off the water and went back to their play.

Over in the garden the venturesome robin baby gobbled up a nice fat worm. “ I’m so glad I flew away from the nest and that rain-

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storm," said he, "it was crowded there and so wet. Here it is dry and there is plenty of room and, best of all, I don't have to divide my worms. I mean to stay."

And he did.

Four little robins living in a tree;
One got wet and then there were three.

THREE BABY ROBINS

Three baby robins thought they heard a mew ;
One started to investigate and then there were two.

AFTER their brothers left home the three remaining robin babies lived very comfortably for several days. Of course the mother bird missed her departed babies but the three who were left didn't mind a bit; there's no use pretending, they simply didn't care one bit! Worse still, they were really glad their brothers were gone!

For now, you see, there was plenty of room for growing, three in a nest is not nearly as crowded as five. And all the nice, fat, dangly worms which their father and mother brought to the nest could be divided into three instead of five pieces. Then, too, Mother Robin had time to talk to her babies and to tell them of all the wonders they would some day see in the big world outside

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the nest. And she gave them lots of good advice too — much of which alas! they didn't remember.

“Now, children,” she said impressively one day, “you must remember that the cat is your worst enemy! Don't go near any cat. Don't even look at one! Fly away at once if you hear a mew!”

“All right, mother,” said one robin, “but we could remember much better if we had some lunch; I for one am hungry.”

“Yes, yes, you shall have something right away,” exclaimed the mother robin and away she flew in search of food.

Left alone the three baby robins chattered softly for a while and then one whispered, “Listen! What's that?”

“Where? I don't hear anything?” said another.

“Listen!” commanded the first.

Sure enough! Right under the nest there sounded a soft, “Me-ow! Me-ow!”

“It's a cat!” exclaimed one robin.

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“Hush! Listen!” said another.

Again they heard it — the cat seemed to be calling to another cat for they could plainly hear, “Me-ow! Me-ow! Some nice baby robins up this tree! Their mother’s gone away! Me-ow! Come quick!”

“It’s a cat!” cried one frightened robin.

“Mother said to fly if we heard one!” exclaimed the biggest of the three.

“We can’t! You *know* we can’t,” cried the others, “we’ve never tried to fly!” And those two littlest babies actually started crying for their mother they were so frightened. “Whatever shall we do?”

“Do?” exclaimed the biggest, “do what you please! I mean to mind my mother and fly away! So there!”

He climbed boldly to the edge of the nest, spread his little untried wings — and flew over to a nearby tree — yes he actually did for this is a true story.

The cat was so surprised that she forgot there might be other robin babies in the same

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nest and she ran off toward the other tree. But the robin was safe — he flew again, this time high where she could not get him.

“ I think the cat must have gone,” whispered one of the two who stayed in the nest, “ for everything is quiet. So we’re safe after all.”

Three baby robins thought they heard a mew,
One started to investigate and then there were two.

THE EMPTY NEST

Two little robins left all alone,
They grew up and then there were none.

THE two baby robins left all alone in the nest grew so fast that their own mother hardly knew them and their father decided that they were plenty big enough to feed themselves.

“You baby them entirely too much,” he said to their mother, “they are big and fat and strong. Why don’t you teach them to fly and let them forage for their own food?”

Mrs. Robin looked thoughtful. “I suppose I might as well,” she admitted, “but you see, now that the three other children are gone, two don’t keep me very busy and —”

“And you are just plain foolish about these two who are left!” interrupted Father Robin, “and there’s no sense in it!” With

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that, he considered his duty done and he flew away for his own dinner.

Mother Robin pecked around in the grass for a while, then she made up her mind what she ought to do — and did it. She flew straight to her nest. Up craned two little necks and two hungry mouths opened wide.

“No, children,” said Mother Robin firmly, “no worms for you this time!”

The baby robins chirped their disappointment.

“No,” continued Mother Robin, “for you are too big — far too big to be fed all the time. How would you like to fly to the garden and get your own worms?”

“We fly?” exclaimed the robins.

“Dear me, yes!” said their mother, “why not?”

“I’d like that,” declared the bravest of the two. “Come on, let’s go right away. Where do we begin?”

“At the edge of the nest, my dear,” said his mother. Then, in her very kindest mother

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way she encouraged him to venture out of the nest.

“Careful! Oh, dear, I’m so afraid you’ll fall!” screamed the other robin baby as he watched his brother pause on the edge of the nest.

“Pooh! Who’s afraid?” boasted the braver robin baby. (Though if the whole truth were told he was a little bit frightened himself — down in the bottom of his heart.) He summoned all his courage — and — flew! Flew over to the lovely garden where the worms were plenty.

“That didn’t seem so very hard after all,” thought the littlest robin and becoming very brave all at once he said, “I think I could do that myself.” So before his mother had time to come back for him, he bravely flew straight to the garden.

“Now isn’t this splendid!” exclaimed the delighted mother robin, “I’m so glad you two didn’t run away too soon as the other children did. I like to have you around with

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me.” She showed them where to find the best worms and the juiciest bugs and was as happy as could be.

Two little robins left all alone,
They grew up and then there were none.

THE CATERPILLAR

A GORGEOUS black-and-gold caterpillar once started out for a stroll. Hardly had he gone a foot before he met a snail.

“Good morning, Friend Caterpillar,” said the snail pleasantly, “where are you going this fine day?”

“I’m out for a little walk,” replied the caterpillar. “I get so very tired of that plain green grass back there that I must have a change sometimes.”

“I’m not surprised at that,” said the snail. “Such a handsome creature as you are should not have to spend his whole life in the grass. You ought to climb up higher and live nearer the flowers.”

“Dear me, how wise you are, Friend Snail,” replied the caterpillar, proudly humping his black-and-yellow back, “I

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never guessed you had so much wisdom in your small shell. Only today I was thinking that I lived too modestly.”

“ Indeed you do,” agreed the snail and he went on about his own business.

The caterpillar felt so flattered and so important and comfortable withal, that he began to look for some place to climb higher.

Soon a butterfly came by.

“ Oh, Friend Butterfly,” called the caterpillar, “ I’m looking for a new place to live. Now you fly around and see something of the world. Please be good enough to tell me if the stem I am on leads to a good home.”

“ Well,” said the butterfly, looking carefully at the whole stem and plant, “ you are on the stem of a goldenrod plant. The blossom is very beautiful and everyone stops to admire it, but — ”

“ Say no more, that’s just where I’ll live,” interrupted the caterpillar, “ for such a handsome creature as I am should live on a beautiful home.”

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“But it won’t be safe up there,” exclaimed the butterfly, “for the birds can see you much quicker there than when you are down in the grass. Stop! You might be eaten!”

“Never fear,” said the caterpillar importantly, “do you suppose any bird would dare eat me? Such a beautiful creature with a gold-and-black stripe?” And he turned his back on the butterfly and didn’t even say thank you or good-bye.

Up that goldenrod stem he climbed — up and up and up.

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“This is going to be fine,” he said as he paused for breath, “I can see so much more of the world from here. This is really a suitable location for such a lovely creature as I am. I can see everything from here.”

“Hadn’t you better keep under the leaf so that the birds won’t see you as they fly past?” asked a big, blue fly who darted by.

“No, indeed,” replied the caterpillar, “I’m not afraid of birds. No bird would dare touch a handsome caterpillar like me!”

And just to show that he was not afraid, he stretched himself out on the top of a big green leaf.

And at that very minute two robins flew past the goldenrod plant.

“Excuse me a minute,” said one, as he spied the caterpillar on the top of the leaf, “I see my dinner waiting for me.”

Down the robin darted and gobbled up that vain yellow-and-black caterpillar all in one bite as though he was just a common worm! Think of that!

TWO MISTAKES

ONE warm summer evening a tiny white kitten looked from his home on the back porch to the yard and the street out front. "I don't see why I have to stay shut up here all the time," said he; "I think I'll start out and explore."

So he wiggled his plump little body through a crack in the porch and started for the street.

Up at the corner he noticed the dazzling electric light burning. "That looks interesting," said he, "and I think I'll investigate." So he slipped his tail down low to the ground and slunk along from shadow to shadow till he reached the corner.

For a few minutes he watched the play of the shadows on the street, then a buzzing sound caught his attention. "What's that?"

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I never knew shadows made noises." He listened carefully, and again that "buzz, buzz" was repeated; and plainly it came from out by the light. "I don't believe those are shadows," cried the kitten eagerly, "I think those black things on the street are bugs good for eating!" And forgetting his fear, he dashed out into the street and pounced on the biggest black spot.

But there was nothing there.

"Funny," said he in surprise, "I wouldn't have supposed a bug could fly quicker than I could catch it. I'll have to try again."

He backed off towards the gutter and watched again. This time he didn't intend to be too slow. As quick as a black spot appeared on the street he pounced upon it ready to gobble it up before it could escape.

But there was nothing there.

Just at that minute there appeared from the shadows of the houses a comfortable, big mother cat. "Come here," she called to her kitten, "what do you mean by running

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away? I thought you were safe on the porch.”

“I’m not running away,” replied the little kitten, “I’m catching June bugs.”

“June bugs,” scoffed the mother cat, “don’t you know those are only shadows on the ground?”

The kitten looked at the black spots doubtfully. “Well, they do look like shadows,” he said, “but I do wish you’d come and see them, mother, they buzz.”

Slowly the mother cat crept out under the brilliant light of the street lamp, where the shadows played flickeringly. “No, they’re only shadows,” she said finally, “and it’s high time you were coming home.”

The kitten eyed the shadows disappointedly. “I wish they really were bugs,” he said, “I thought it was going to be such fun to catch them.”

And just at that very minute, two great fat June bugs fell down from the electric light above. Quick as a flash each cat

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grabbed one, ate it with satisfaction, and then started for home.

“Of course you were mistaken in the beginning,” said the mother cat, “but I’m glad I was mistaken in the end.”

“I thought I’d be right about something,” said the kitten; and he trotted along home with his mother.

HOUSE HUNTING

PERCHED up high in the back yard of a city home were three little wren houses. And very inviting they looked too, you may be sure.

Poor little Mrs. Robin Redbreast wanted so much to live in one of them. She couldn't forget the very narrow escape her precious babies had last year when a cat—a big sleek house cat—nearly, nearly, *nearly* ate her dear babies. But for the fact that a neighbor's dog trotted into the yard just in time and diverted her attention they would surely have been gone. So, naturally, Mrs. Robin Redbreast sighed for a really-truly house with a front door too small for cats.

But her sighing did no good, for a robin is too large to get through the door of a wren house. She knew because she had tried. For

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several hours after she first saw the house she tried desperately to get in that tiny door; she pecked at it, she clawed and scolded it vigorously but it was too small. So finally she gave up and built her nest in a nearby tree.

“But I mean to see who gets that nice house,” she said with an air of great determination, “I mean to be very particular about our neighbors.”

For several days no bird came near the house. Then early one morning, a very cunning Mr. and Mrs. Wren flew into the yard.

“Oh, look!” cried Mrs. Wren, “here’s a dear little house! Exactly what we’ve been looking for.”

“To be sure it is,” chirped Mr. Wren delightedly, and then, unfortunately, he looked around. When you have found exactly what you want it’s a very bad plan to look further—you will see trouble every time. Trouble is exactly what those wrens found; trouble in the form of the two other houses!

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“ Oh, look at these! ” cried the foolish fellow, and of course Mrs. Wren looked.

“ Aren't they lovely! ” she cried, “ we must look these over carefully before we settle. Maybe one of these is even better than that nice one we first saw. ” So they examined them carefully. They ran in and out; they examined, they tittered and exclaimed till the watching Mrs. Robin was disgusted.

“ Why in the world can't they decide and start to furnishing? ” she chirped crossly. “ I don't believe wrens know a good home when they see one! I'd be glad enough to take any of the three! ”

Finally Mrs. Wren decided on the first house. They carried in straws and worked very hard all day on the furnishing. And then she decided that she wanted the second house and the work began all over.

After a whole day's work on the second house she decided that the third was much the best; and then after an hour she moved back into the first!

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That last move was too much for practical Mrs. Robin Redbreast. "Such fickle creatures!" she scolded, "I won't let them stay in that nice house!" She screamed and she scolded so vigorously that Mr. and Mrs. Wren had to give up all three houses and settle in a distant barn.

A BEAR STORY

A GREAT grizzly bear lived in a huge, stone bear pit in a big city zoo. Part of the time he stayed in his snug little house in the back of his cage; the rest of the day he spent walking up and down, back and across, round and round the edge of his cage, swinging his great grizzly head as though he would like to hunt for big game.

In the afternoons of the warm spring and summer days he had his best fun. For then the children came and threw him peanuts and popcorn which he would gobble up in his indifferent offhand fashion. He really loved the peanuts and liked the fun of coaxing them from the children better than anything he did all the year. But it would never do for a bear — a handsome, great, big, grizzly bear — to appear to like anything as common as

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peanuts, no indeed! So he pretended that he didn't care a grunt and that he just ate the peanuts to oblige the children.

One bright spring day he sat back on his haunches in the front of his cage and eyed the crowd of interested people in front of him. Popcorn and peanuts came his way just as easily! For everybody liked to watch him snap his big jaws shut and crunch on the food he caught. But sometimes the aim was not quite true; or sometimes the peanut hit the bars of the cage and swerved to one side; so that he could not catch it without going after it.

"I wonder what I had better do about those peanuts I am missing," he said as he eyed the crowd thoughtfully. "I can't afford to lose my dignity by running after anything and I don't like to lose the nuts. Maybe I can reach that one there with my paw," and he located a nut with a glance from the corner of his eye.

Just at that very minute, a glossy black-

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bird lighted on the top of the iron fence around the cage. "Oh, look at that fine peanut," he chirped, "right down by that bear and he doesn't see it at all. I mean to get it myself." Down he darted, grabbed the nut in his bill — just as the bear's huge, cushioned paw reached out for the nut.

But the bear was too dignified and slow. Quick as a flash the bird grabbed the nut, flew to the high iron fence and the bear's paw descended — on nothing at all!

"Funny!" said the bear to himself slowly, "I was sure there was a peanut there!"

Up on the iron fence the blackbird crunched the peanut and laughed to himself at the joke he had played on the great big bear.

A BLACKBIRD JOKE

ONE pleasant spring day a blackbird flew down from a tree to grub for worms around a rosebush. Not a big, cross-looking blackbird as so many of them are — no indeed. This one was a nice, slim, lady-like looking blackbird who didn't look one bit quarrelsome or fussy.

“I don't feel very hungry,” she thought to herself, “and yet an extra worm or two never comes amiss; I think I'll scratch a little here.” So she pecked and she scratched and she flicked away the dirt with her glossy black bill.

Not very far away a big, squawky, bossy blackbird stood and watched her. “If that little blackbird down there digs up any worms,” he said to himself, “I'll be ready. I'll dart down and gobble them up before

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she has a chance to eat them.” So he watched very carefully.

Now of course the lady-like little blackbird didn't know she was being watched; or if she did, she pretended she didn't, which is nearly the same thing. She went right along with her digging and digging and digging — and she didn't find a single worm.

“This is very stupid,” she said to herself. “I wonder if I had better look elsewhere?” She cocked her head and thought a minute. “No,” she decided, “I think I'll stay right here. Maybe there are good worms a little further down. I'll dig deeper.” So she went on digging and digging — and she didn't find a single worm.

Now the blackbird up in the tree saw her diligently digging; saw her stop and look into the ground thoughtfully and then resume her digging.

“What can she have found?” thought he. “She would never dig so long unless she had found something especially good.” He

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cocked his head to one side and watched her shrewdly. "I wonder if she has found a worm and eaten it right under my nose?"

The more he thought, the angrier he became and the more certain that the little lady blackbird had eaten up the finest worm of the season.

And still that lady-like blackbird went on digging and digging — and didn't find a single worm.

At last the big bird could stand it no longer. He swooped down from the tree; he ruffled out his feathers and he blew out his chest till he looked twice his real size. Then how he did storm at that industrious little blackbird!

"Get away from here, will you?" he squawked at her. "Don't eat all those fine worms! I mean to make a feast of those worms myself!"

The lady-like blackbird turned and looked at him. Then she shrugged her shoulders as plainly as ever a bird could and remarked,

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“ Oh, very well, if that’s the way you feel about it! ” and she flew away.

Left alone, the big, bossy blackbird started digging and digging and digging and digging — and didn’t find a single worm!

THE EARLY WORM

ONCE there lived a worm who tried to become very wise.

“What matters it,” he said to himself, “that I am only a common, every-day earthworm? I can listen and think and become the very wisest worm in the whole world.”

“Silly!” laughed a brother earthworm, “don’t you know that with all your thinking you can never be anything but a common earthworm just as I am?”

“You are the silly one,” said the ambitious worm, “and you are very stupid too. I’ll not talk to you.” And he turned around and crawled away. “Some day,” he remarked before he was out of hearing, “when I am very wise, I will come back and teach you many things.” And then he burrowed deep into the ground for a quiet study.

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All winter long he stayed down in the ground. Some folks said that he stayed there because he was asleep. Some said he stayed because the ground was frozen and he couldn't crawl up. He said he stayed because he wanted to have time and quiet to think and to grow wise. You see, about earthworms, as about everything else in this world of ours, you may believe almost anything you please, according to the kind of person you are.

Along towards spring, when the breezes began to blow soft and warm from the south-land and when the birds began to start for the north, the earthworm felt a desire to dig his way to the light.

“I believe,” thought he, “that if I am ever to amount to much, I will have to get on the top of the earth where my study will be of some use.”

So he dug very hard and prowled and wormed his way upward through the half-thawed soil. Pretty soon he remembered

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that worm who had laughed at him. "If I could only find that fellow," he declared, "I'd tell him some of the wisdom I have thought of this winter."

And then, as sometimes happens in this world, he found himself beside that very worm.

"Good morning, lazy worm," said he, "why don't you work as I do? Only workers find the light."

"Humph! You can't know much," scoffed the lazy worm. "I don't intend to hurry myself. Haven't you ever heard the saying 'The early bird catches the worm'? I assure you I don't intend to be found very early."

"That's a foolish saying," retorted the worm-who-thought-himself-wise, "I intend to work hard and fast. That's the way to be happy. Work early and late — that's my motto!"

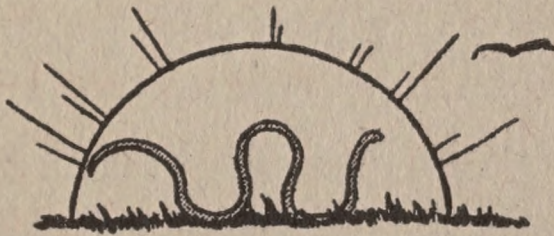
So he worked very hard and he worked very fast and soon he found himself on the

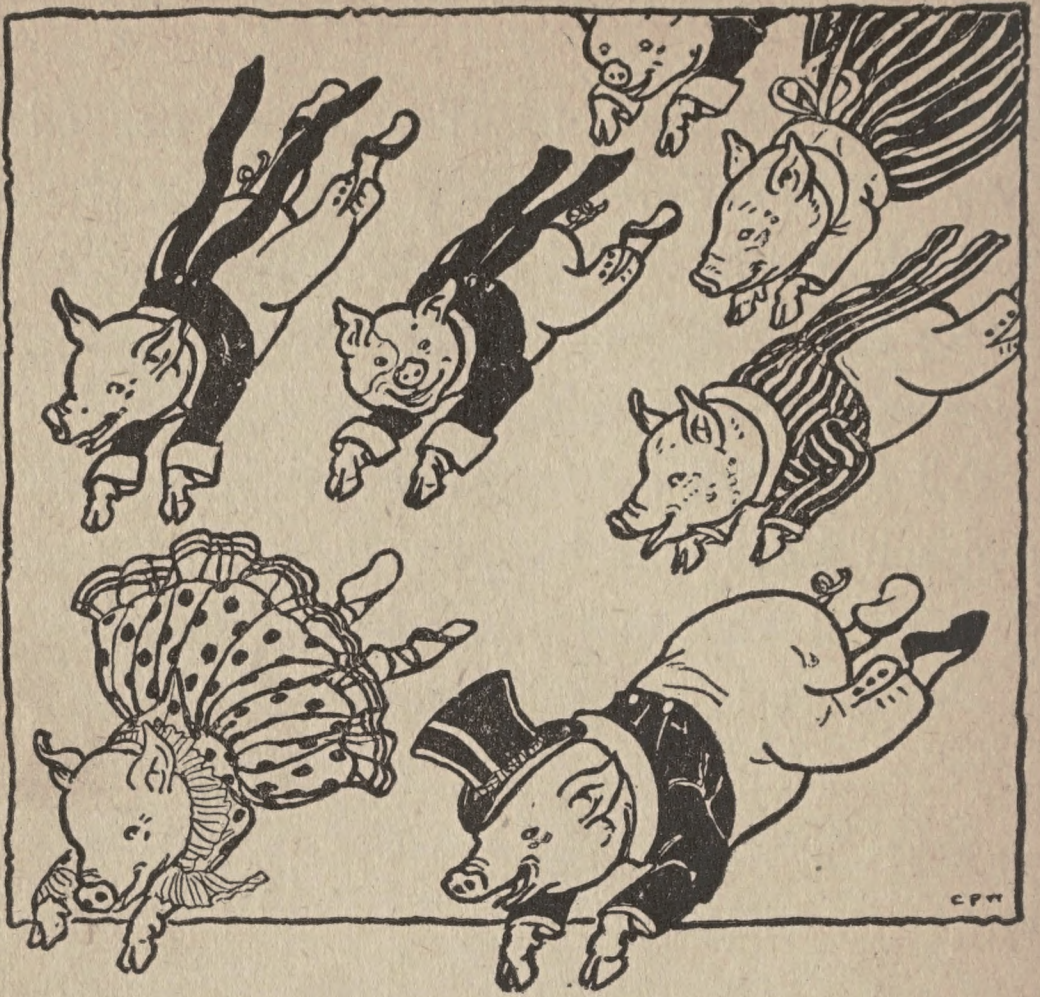
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surface of the garden just as the sun peeped over the horizon.

And at that very minute a robin came along and gobbled up that worm — worm, wisdom and everything!

All of which only proves that you never can tell what may happen, so you'd better be careful what motto you go by.





SEVEN LITTLE PIGS

SEVEN little pigs once lived with their mother in the corner of a big barnyard. For a while they thought their tiny corner was just as nice a place to live in as could be, but as they grew and began rooting about they felt decidedly too crowded. Fortunately the farmer too, noticed that they were crowded and moved them to a roomy corner

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of the meadow which he fenced off nicely with rails.

For a time they had great fun running about, digging in the mellow ground and having a beautiful time in a nice, comfortable pig-fashion, till one day the biggest of the seven pigs happened to look over the fence. (You know yourself how you feel if you happen to look over the fence around your own life, so you can quite imagine how he felt!) He saw all the lovely pasture; all the woods beyond; fields and trees and hills in the distance — and that miserable fence keeping him in his corner.

That poor, biggest pig stuck his nose through a crack between the rails and looked and looked at the inviting sight; and the more eagerly he looked the more miserable he felt.

“Come on, Piggie,” grunted his little brother, “what makes you hang around that old fence all the time? Nothing there. Don’t you want some corn?”

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“ I’ll get some corn after a while,” retorted the biggest pig crossly, and then he added, “what I want now is to root in yonder meadow.”

The six other pigs couldn’t understand such un-piglike talk, so they simply turned their backs and went on with their eating; they gobbled up their dinner, and their brother’s too, and then they grunted for more, just as they always had.

But as no more was in sight, they at last had time to notice their big brother who was still looking through the fence.

“ I wonder what he really sees over there? ” asked one.

“ Foolishness,” replied his sister.

“ Let’s go see,” said another.

So over to the fence they scrambled and quickly they lined up beside their big brother and looked through the fence too.

“ Lovely green meadow,” said one.

“ Pretty good eating no doubt,” said another.

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“And we can’t get over there because this old fence is in the way,” whined the biggest pig.

“Let’s knock the fence down,” said a fourth resolutely.

They tried and they tried, but the fence wouldn’t move. Finally they decided to push all together in a rush and — down tumbled the fence with a crash! Through the opening they scrambled, all seven together, pell-mell out into the big green meadow.

Over and over the pretty meadow they hunted for food, but when twilight came they all ambled back to the corner that had been fenced in.

“It’s very queer,” said the biggest pig as he comfortably swallowed some of the good supper he found waiting him in the corner, “that meadow looked so wonderful through the fence, but really and truly it’s only a very common meadow — not half as comfortable as our own home corner.”

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The other pigs grunted as they gobbled their supper, and then they all settled down contentedly and went to sleep. Home was good enough for them.

PRIDE AND A FALL

ONE bright sunny day a pompous green-and-black beetle decided to go for a walk. He cleaned his feet; he cleaned his head; he brushed his body and he polished his wings. He prepared the most careful toilet a beetle could possibly make.

Then he looked himself over thoughtfully and said, "There's no doubt about it, I am the handsomest beetle that ever was made!"

He started on his walk. "And look how beautifully I walk! So stately and so slow! Was there ever such a wonderful beetle in all the world?"

"Oh yes, lots of them," said a sparrow who happened to hear what the beetle said. "And they all think themselves very wonderful — all of them."

"Too bad, too bad, poor creatures," said

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the beetle pityingly, "I'm sorry for their ignorance. But you must excuse them. They have never seen me." And he waddled off in his grandest style.

The sparrow watched him till he was out of sight and then he laughed and laughed; he laughed so hard he could hardly fly and tell his mates the joke. "That old beetle's going to come to grief some day, you mark my words," he added at the end of his story. "They always do when they brag about themselves that way."

The beetle never thought of anything happening to himself; he felt sure he was way above all danger of accident. He waddled along, thinking of his lovely velvet fur and his beautiful shiny black wings and his polished manners and he never even thought of watching for danger.

Till all of a sudden, he saw before him a big, glossy blackbird.

"You look fat and juicy; I think I'll eat you up," said the blackbird.

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The beetle looked around to see who he could be talking about.

“I mean *you*,” added the blackbird, hopping about the beetle.

“ME?” exclaimed the horrified beetle. “I’m not to eat! I’m a grand creature made to walk around and be admired.”

“Well, well, well! You don’t say so,” laughed the blackbird, as if he was very much amused, “as I’ve just had a big dinner, I guess I’ll not eat you after all. I’ll just show you what happens to conceited folks like you.” And with one peck of his sharp bill he turned that conceited beetle over onto his back.

The beetle kicked and squirmed and begged and pleaded — all in vain. Off to his nest the blackbird had flown, and the upside-down beetle found that he would have to turn over by himself or stay on his back forever!

In shame and distress that boastful beetle worked for hours to regain his footing.

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When he finally righted himself, a very subdued and humble beetle crawled back in silence to his home.

And he never again boasted.



THE BLACKBIRD'S BATH

ONE dull gray week in the spring the water drops poured down from the sky so fast that people began to forget there had ever been any sunshine, and they quite forgot the color of the smiley blue sky.

During one morning late in this same dull gray week, two blackbirds sat on the branch of a big pine tree and tried to think of something to say. (You can fancy yourself how hard it would be to find anything to say if you had been eating and sitting and lying and sleeping in the rain for days and days!) The first three days they had been very cheerful about the rain. They had called the downpour "showers" and had planned what they would do when the sun shone again. But by the fourth day they got very tired and they spent most of the time just sitting

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glumly still and wishing for sunshine. By the fifth day they were too disgusted for even that — they couldn't wish any more, so they just sat.

Finally one of the pair roused himself to remark, "I had planned to take a bath this morning."

"A bath!" exclaimed the other with a disgusted squawk. "A bath! Can't you think of anything more agreeable than a bath this wet day?"

Now, the first blackbird had not seriously planned a bath — he had merely remarked a passing thought. But as soon as his companion objected, he immediately discovered that a bath was the one thing he really wanted in life. "Yes, a bath," he declared positively. "I want to take one today."

"Well, help yourself," squawked his companion, "there's surely enough water about!"

"Oh, I don't mean a rain bath," said the first blackbird, "I mean a really truly bath in a nice little puddle." And then he began

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to look around. There were so many puddles he had plenty to choose from; big puddles, little puddles, muddy puddles and grassy puddles, in fact there seemed nothing but puddles anywhere! He hopped down to the edge of the branch, then down to the ground he jumped and carefully he inspected every puddle he saw.

“Better come down and have some fun!” he called to his companion, “investigating is lots more fun than just standing still.” But the sulky blackbird only ruffled his feathers a little more and gave out an ugly squawk — and the water dripped and dripped from his tail and from his bill.

Finally, just as the energetic blackbird was having a hard time to decide between two very tempting looking puddles, the sulky blackbird glanced out of the corner of his eye and spied a beautiful crystal-clear puddle in the grass just under the next tree. It was a regular invitation bathing pool.

Instantly his crossness was gone! He

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gave a happy cry and darted down into the water.

The other blackbird left his two puddles and came a-flying to the fun. They splashed and they splattered and they had the gayest possible time — all in the pelting rain.

“Do you know,” said one, as they finally flew back to their tree refreshed and invigorated, “I believe we could always have fun in the rain if we would only hunt around and find it!”

A FOOLISH OLD ROOSTER

A FOOLISH old rooster once lived in a chicken house close by the alley fence. How do I know he was foolish do you ask? The easiest and surest way in the world. He thought he knew everything and that's the best possible proof that he knew nothing.

All he really did know was that he could crow louder than anyone of his acquaintance, and he used that little knowledge all the time. If any other cock said, "This is a very nice day," he immediately said, "It isn't! It isn't! It isn't!" Until everyone was glad of the chance to have quiet and so didn't try to dispute him. And he, stupid fellow that he was, thought that proved he was right.

Now one night an automobile with glaring big headlights came down that very alley. And just by the chicken house a nail bit into

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the tire and the automobile had to stop and rest awhile so that the driver could say some things and do some things to that poor, punctured tire. And all the while he was saying and doing the glaring lights from that automobile fell full on the chicken house.

Pretty soon the rooster who was always right, had a queer dream of bright sunlight and he wakened up suddenly to find a bright white light shining into every crack of the chicken house — into every crack and corner. “That’s queer,” he muttered, “day has come already and I feel just as tired as when I went to roost.”

Then he looked across the house and in the glare of the great light he saw the other roosters and all the hens sound asleep. “Stupid things! Why don’t you wake up? Wakity, wakity, wakity up!” he screeched in his loudest voice — which was pretty loud.

“Stop waking me up!” grumbled a hen nearby, “can’t you see that’s only a light?”

“Only a light?” exclaimed the rooster

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scornfully, "I guess I know a day when I see one! Wakity! Wakity! Wakity up!" and he crowed as loud as ever he could.

All over the neighborhood the chickens heard him. Some crowed back "Good morning!" and some cackled crossly, "Silly! Go to sleep!" till that alley sounded like a whole poultry show.

And just then the automobile driver finished mending his tire; cranked up and drove away and the darkness of night settled over that alley.

"Now I guess you'll go to sleep!" said one old rooster crossly.

"I guess I'll not! I guess I know a day when I see one," sputtered the know-it-all rooster spitefully and into the night he crowed, "Wakity! Wakity! Wakity up!"

But it really was very dark you know — and he had worked hard all day and everybody else was sound asleep now and could not argue back — and — so — he went to sleep too!

SUE'S PRESENT

SUE'S father was going on a fishing trip and Sue could not go along. Of course father explained that fishing trips were no fun for little girls, and mother talked about the mosquitoes and the camp fare and everything that she could think of that was disagreeable about the trip. But still the little girl felt a bit forlorn and deserted when her father started off without her.

"Never mind, Sue," called her father, as the train pulled out of the station, "I'll send you my very first catch."

So Sue watched for the mail man every day and wondered and wondered what he would bring her.

She had not long to wait.

The third day after father left, the parcel-post wagon stopped in front of her

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house and the carrier brought in a great box addressed to Sue.

“What in the world?” exclaimed Sue’s mother when she saw the box. “Has he sent an aquarium? I told him to have the fish dressed before he sent them.”

Wonderingly she tore the lid off the box and cautiously she peered inside.

And what do you suppose she saw?

A turtle! Yes, sir! A great, big, lumbering turtle.

What in the world could they do with that?

“Father said he would send me the first thing he caught and he has!” cried Sue as she danced around happily.

“He certainly has,” agreed mother, “and now what are we going to do with it?”

Of course something had to be done, and that quickly, as the turtle could not stay in the box all the time. So everybody in the house turned in and helped. A tub in which a few stones were scattered was placed in the back yard in a spot where it could get both

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shade and sunshine. Some crackers were crumbed into the water that Sue's mother poured into the tub and everybody watched to see the turtle eat.

But the turtle didn't eat. At least he didn't eat when anyone could see him. And as the days went by he visibly pined away. He got sleepy and thin and was plainly so homesick that Sue's mother was at her wit's end to know what to do with him.

At last father came home, and of course he at once offered advice.

He made a new home in a new tub and he put flies and minnows in the water in a most tempting fashion. But still the turtle pined and pined, so they decided to set him free.

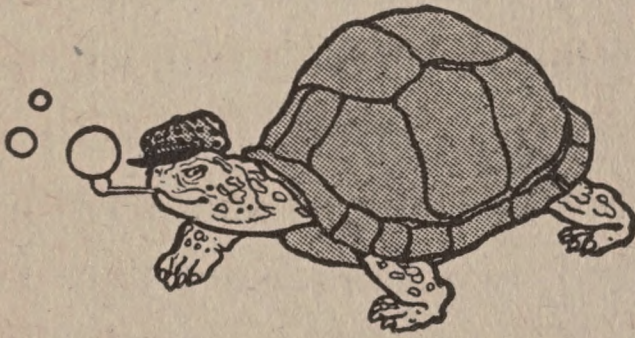
After an early dinner one day, father put the turtle in a basket and he and Sue set out for the city park. When they reached the little lagoon in the park, father set the basket down on the tiny beach, lifted out the turtle and started him for the water.

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At first the turtle only blinked lazily; then he stretched his neck toward the water; then, as fast as he could waddle, he made for the lake!

And there he lived a long, happy life.

This is the true story of how a great big, big turtle happened to be living in a tiny, tiny lake in the city park.



MR. ROBIN CHANGES HIS MIND

ONE fine summer day the sun shone so bright and warm that a lazy young robin decided to take the day off from work. For some time he had been thinking to himself that he could have much more fun if only he didn't have to scratch for worms. Why, he could sing and play and take long, exploring journeys and really enjoy life, if it were not for this same old eating and worm hunting which took so much time every day.

The more he thought about it the crosser it made him, and the harder it was to hunt worms. (You know yourself that the more you complain about work, the harder work is to do.) To be sure worms always tasted very good, but Mr. Robin didn't happen to think about that.

On this particular morning he wakened

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after an extra fine sleep and found himself feeling unusually strong and brave. "I'm tired of wishing I didn't have to work," he said to himself. "Today I am not going to work one bit! I don't care if I don't have any worms — what are worms anyway?"

Having shouted that note of independence from the edge of his nest, he felt more brave and important than ever. He preened his feathers, stretched his neck and thought what an unusually smart and handsome bird he was.

But as no one was around to notice, he soon became tired of showing himself off. "I guess I'll take that journey I've been wishing for," he said, and off he went.

He flew a long, long way till he came to a river where he got a drink and stopped to rest a while. By this time he began to feel queer — very, very queer. Queerer than he had ever felt before in all his little well-fed life. But he wouldn't admit that he was hungry — not he! He pretended very hard

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that he didn't want a bit to eat and he started again on his journey.

After a while he stopped in a yard where the grass was green and fresh and where some little chickens were playing and others were scratching for worms.

"That's a good place for worms," said Mr. Robin, as he eyed the moist soil hungrily, "I guess I'll get me some." And then he remembered that he wasn't bothering with worms that day and he turned his attention to the chickens who were playing.

But try as hard as he could, digging worms seemed more interesting than any game — he couldn't keep his eyes off those chicks who were finding such good eating!

Finally one little chick pulled out a fine, fat worm and dangled it squirmingly from his bill. That was too much for Mr. Robin. He suddenly forgot all his fine-sounding ambitions and he realized that worms were what he wanted and here was a chance to get one without work!

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Quick as a flash, he darted down, snatched that worm, and swallowed it whole.

For an instant the chickens stared with amazement; then with a rush, they flew at that Mr. Robin and pecked at him and

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screamed at him till he was glad to fly hastily back to his own home yard.

“ I guess I’ve learned something today,” said he as soon as he found his breath after his quick flying, “ I’ve learned that I must eat, and that it is wiser and better to work than to steal.” And he promptly set to digging his breakfast.

KITTY LOU'S TOOTHACHE

POOOR little Kitty Lou was in trouble. She didn't feel like playing; she wasn't hungry; she didn't seem to herself one bit like the nice, playful little kitty who usually had such a good, happy time all the day long. And she had no idea what could be the matter. She only knew that her head felt ten sizes too big for her and that she couldn't eat a bite without having the most dreadful pain. How she did wish that someone would talk to her and help her!

She went to her little mistress and softly rubbed her nose against her dress. But the little mistress, Mary Jane, was very busy with a bran-new doll so she merely reached down and stroked Kitty Lou a time or two — that was all.

Big brother Ned, to whom Kitty Lou next appealed, only laughed when Kitty Lou

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rubbed her head and whined dismally. "No, sir, you don't fool me again, Miss Kitty!" said he, "I remember how you whined and fussed last week. And how I stopped my work to see what was the matter with you only to find out that all you wanted was a romp! You can't fool me twice the same way." And Ned went on with his whittling.

That was just the trouble. Kitty Lou was so mischievous and so frolicsome that usually all she did was to romp, so now that she needed help no one took her seriously.

She stood on the front porch awhile, grinding her teeth together and finding that that only made the hurt worse; then she sat down on her pillow near the porch swing and cried and cried and cried.

Before long Mary Jane's mother came out on the porch with her mending basket and settled herself for an hour's work. "Oh, Kitty Lou," she said, when she heard the kitten's mournful crying, "aren't you ashamed to cry like that?"

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But Kitty Lou only cried the harder.

“How am I to work when you cry that way?” said Mary Jane’s mother in distress. “If I didn’t know how you cry and fuss to be played with, I would say you were in pain,” she added. “Come here, Kitty Lou, and let me look at you.”

That was all the encouragement Kitty Lou needed. She jumped up into her mistress’s lap and cried hard, just as though she was trying to say, “Please believe me, something hurts!”

Mary Jane’s mother looked the little kitten over thoughtfully. Then she said, “Kitty Lou, I believe you have a toothache. We’ll just take you to a doctor and have that naughty tooth fixed.”

So Mary Jane was called from her new doll and Kitty Lou was tucked snugly in a nice roomy basket and carried to the doctor’s house. The achy tooth was pulled out, and, for the first time in three whole days, dainty little Kitty Lou wanted to play.

GALA DAY IN SQUIRREL LAND

“**M**ONDAY, Tuesday, Wednesday,
Thursday, Friday, Saturday.”

“Those days are all gone and now it’s
Sunday.”

“Ho, ho, but I am glad!”

“Glad! Glad! Glad! So am I!”

And four little voices gave one jolly, all-
together, squeak.

Have you guessed who was talking? Who
was so glad to have Sunday come? No?
The squirrels in the big city park!

Now, of course you can guess why they
liked Sunday the best day of all. Because
that is the day when children visit the parks.
To be sure, children go on other days too,
but on Sundays they go with their fathers,
and you know how good fathers are about
buying nuts and goodies that children and
squirrels both like.

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On this particular Sunday, Brownie had wakened with the feeling that something nice was going to happen but he couldn't quite think what. Maybe you feel that way yourself sometimes and so know how it is. Then he wakened up a little more and remembered that it was Sunday. Sunday? Yes, Sunday. And he began combing his hair and sprucing his tail for he wanted to look his very best.

Somehow or other he primped, got a bite of breakfast, and put in the time till the children began to come and then what fun he had!

First came his friend Tommy with one peanut in each pocket. Brownie always liked that because then he could nose deep into the dark, warm pockets and get the goodie.

Then came Dick and his father. They walked through the park on their way to church and they both had good nuts for Brownie, you may be sure.

So all through the day the children came,

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and grown folks too, till actually Brownie couldn't eat another nut.

"Silly, why worry about that!" laughed Gray Tail, to whom Brownie complained about his lack of appetite. "Store them away for a rainy day as I do."

"Fine idea," declared Brownie happily, and just at that minute Dorothy and her father walked down the path through the bushes. They had peanuts and popcorn — oh, such a lot of nice fresh popcorn! — and they spilled some down on the path for Brownie.

Such riches! "Come, come, come!" squeaked Brownie happily, "come friends, here's nuts and plenty for all!" And he ran busily back and forth, back and forth between the heap of goodies and the bushes, storing up a neat little pile of his own, which he planned to bury later.

All the squirrels came a-running and Dorothy clapped her hands and watched them scurrying hither and thither, eating

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what they could and carrying the rest away.

And just then, when everybody was so busy and happy, what do you suppose happened?

Nine, bold, black crows spied the popcorn; swooped down and gobbled it up right under the astonished noses of the squirrels! Ate up every bit! And then flew away, leaving the squirrels too amazed to speak!

When Brownie at last found his voice he declared, "Next time I have a feast like that, I'll take time to bury each bite as I get it. Then it will be safe!" And he did.



A HIGHLY CULTIVATED MOUSE

ONCE upon a time a Highly Cultivated mouse lived in a common pantry. And, as you have guessed, there was a reason for his being there.

That wonderful H. C. mouse had a very common mother and she had always lived in a very common pantry, and of course she brought up her children to live in the same place, so you mustn't blame the children too much. And you mustn't blame the mother either, for, you see, she had a very large family, and knowing that it was easier to get food in the pantry it was quite natural that she should want to live there — quite.

For some time the whole mouse family lived very happily till suddenly one day the H. C. mouse felt that something was wrong.

“I'm a wonderful creature,” he said to

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himself musingly, “ quite different from my common brothers and sisters. I feel an inward yearning — ”

“ Maybe you’re hungry,” interrupted his mother, who happened to hear him talking. “ There’s a new box of crackers on the third shelf. It won’t take you long to get into them — the paper is very thin.”

“ Why will you bother me with such common thoughts?” asked the H. C. mouse crossly, “ this yearning of mine is my growing soul, my — ”

“ Humph! I hope you get over *that* soon!” exclaimed his mother disgustedly,

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and with a little flirt of her tail she scampered away.

“Alas! How little is one appreciated!” sighed the H. C. mouse (he thought he was making a very original remark too — you see, he didn’t know that every highly cultivated person in the world says the same thing!) “I’m tired of playing in such a common place anyway. I think I’ll move.” So he straightened his tail firmly and moved into the living room where he found a very comfortable apartment in the back of the piano.

“Now, this is what I call a suitable place to live,” said he, with a luxurious sigh, and he settled down to enjoy comfort and culture.

Now, the worst thing about comfort and culture is that very often they won’t go together. And though the H. C. mouse became very wise as he listened to brilliant conversation and very cultured as he heard fine music, he also became very hungry, because he had nothing to eat.

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“What is hunger?” he asked himself scornfully, “I am above anything so common!” But just the same he pricked up his ears when, later in the evening, he smelled cheese.

“I think I had better investigate this most gratifying odor,” he said to himself (and his eyes brightened hungrily), “for cheese served in a living room must be especially fine!”

So sneaking out from behind the piano, he crept slyly along the floor towards the delectable smelling cheese.

Suddenly there was a click — a scratch — and all was still.

In the morning a child’s voice called, “Father, come here quick! You’ve caught the mouse!”

Which only shows that a pantry is a pretty good place to live in, after all.

BROWN TAIL'S ADVENTURE

“**F** LAP-FLAP-FLAP!”
“ Flop-flop-flop!”

What in the world could make that funny noise?

“ Flap-flap-flap!”

“ Flop-flop-flop!”

Brown Tail, a handsome young rabbit, poked his nose enquiringly through the garden gate.

“ Flap-flap-flap!”

“ Flop-flop-flop!”

That was too much for Brown Tail. His curiosity got the better of his caution and he determined to discover the cause of this queer noise and to discover it quickly. What did he care if his mother had told him to stay near home? Or that his father had said that the farmer's garden was one place where wise and obedient little rabbits never went alone?

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What, indeed, would any up-to-date young rabbit care for father's or mother's advice if an interesting adventure was just on the other side of a fence?

Brown Tail poked his nose through the widest crack and looked around.

“ Flap-flap-flap! ”

“ Flop-flop-flop! ”

“ There it is again, ” he exclaimed, “ and I'm quite sure that if my father were here he would say, ‘ Brown Tail, go at once and discover what that noise is! ’ He had no idea such a thing as a noise would happen when he told me not to go into the garden. A noise makes a difference. ” And Brown Tail talked so positively to himself that he became quite excited and finally decided it was his duty — his really-truly, bounden duty — to go and investigate that noise.

Through the garden fence he wiggled; under the spreading tomato vines he crawled and over toward the cabbage patch.

“ Flap-flap-flap! ”

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“Flop-flop-flop!”

Yes, there was where the sound was. It undoubtedly came from the cabbage patch close over by the chicken yard. Now, the cabbage patch is the most interesting place in the whole garden — at least that is the opinion of Brown Tail’s family — so of course he didn’t mind exploring in that direction. Not only didn’t mind, but he was quite willing to stop long enough to nibble a few tender cabbage leaves.

“My, but these are good,” he said as he crunched the leaves daintily. “Too bad my little brothers and sisters have to miss all this fun simply because father and mother have an idea that this peaceful garden is dangerous. I mean to tell them how mistaken —”

“Bow-ow-ow! Bow-ow-ow!” It was the big watchdog’s bark.

Poor little Brown Tail turned sick with fright. A glimpse through the cabbage leaves showed him not only the dog but the farmer

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too, armed with a gun making straight for the cabbage patch!

Brown Tail summoned all his courage and ran! Ran for dear life toward home! "And if I ever get safely home," he panted, "I'll mind my father all the rest of my life!"

And he did.

But the noise? Haven't you guessed? It was only the old scarecrow flapping, flopping, in the summer breeze.



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